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PARTY CONDITIONS IN ENGLAND

AND THE CAUSES OF LIBERAL SUCCESS IN 1906.¹

THERE is usually a tendency on the part of Englishmen to exaggerate the importance of a general election—to insist that the fate of the British Empire is more dependent on an immediately pending general election or an election in progress than it has been on any general appeal to the constituencies since 1832.

The year 1832 is invariably taken as a dating point in these comparisons. And it is quite in keeping that it should be thus taken; for in 1832 the modern period of British parliamentary history had its beginnings. Before 1832 the British parliamentary system was of the most nondescript character. England, Scotland and Ireland elected their representatives to Parliament on systems peculiar to each country. The mode of electing members to the House of Commons could scarcely be called a system either in England or in Ireland. Scotland was the only country in which there was any uniformity in the representative system. In all three countries electoral corruption was rampant; the landed and moneyed classes were easily dominant; and they were in a position to dictate the personnel and party character of half the members of the House of Commons.

Uniformity was introduced in England, Scotland and Ireland when the suffrage was first reformed and extended in 1832. In

¹ General Election in 1900

Conservatives and Liberal Unionists.....	402
Liberals and Labor.....	186
Irish Nationalists	82
Total	670

General Election in 1906

Liberals (372) and Labor (57).....	429
Conservatives (130) and Liberal Unionists (28).....	158
Irish Nationalists.....	83
Total	670

1867 the suffrage was again extended; and in 1885 there was still another extension; and the net result of these three measures of 1832, 1867 and 1885 is that today every man in Great Britain who has had a settled abode for one year before the voters' lists are compiled may vote at a parliamentary election.

Democracy in England, so far as elections to the House of Commons are concerned, had its beginnings or rather its revival in 1832; and to most Englishmen there is little parliamentary history before the reform of the electoral system three quarters of a century ago. The Reform Act of 1832 is for Great Britain much what the Revolution is for Americans; and hence when an English political speaker desires to emphasize the unusual importance of a general election, he declares that it is the most important since the Reform Act.

Statements to this effect were made from thousands of political platforms in England, Scotland and Ireland during the general election in January, 1906, and with more truth than on previous occasions. There have been many elections of outstanding importance since 1832. Such was the election of 1868, which followed the extension of the franchise to the working classes in the towns and cities, and at which Gladstone pledged himself to the disestablishment of the English Church in Ireland. Such was that of 1885, which followed the extension of the franchise to laborers in rural England, and at which workingmen members first began to be systematically elected to the House of Commons. The election of 1885 thrust the Home Rule question into British politics and gave it a prominence and importance that could never have attached to it so long as the laboring population in Ireland did not possess the parliamentary franchise. Such also was the general election in 1886, which followed the defeat of Gladstone's first Home Rule bill. The election of 1886 decided the tendency in British politics for twenty years. It was responsible for the reaction of the last ten years; and its influence even yet is by no means entirely spent. But none of these elections—1868, 1885 or 1886—approaches in far-reaching importance the general election of 1906; for had the Liberals been defeated and Chamberlain become master of the situation, the reaction would have continued, and the likelihood

is that Great Britain would have reversed her fiscal policy of the last sixty years and would have ranged herself among the nations which shield their farmers and manufacturers by protective tariffs.

Chamberlain did not propose high tariffs. The policy which he had outlined called for a duty of only two shillings a quarter on foreign grain, equally moderate duties on other food-stuffs, and a very moderate protection on the output of British factories. Nobody, however, imagined that this moderation would long have characterized any British protective system. The landowners and the farmers would no more have remained content with a nominal duty on grain and food-stuffs from non-British countries than the woollen manufacturers of the United States would be content with a tariff for revenue only to protect them from importations from Yorkshire, Wiltshire and Scotland. With Chamberlain dominant, or his fiscal system once established, the agricultural interests in England would have forced the pace, just as they did in the half-century that preceded the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846; and in self-defence most of the non-exporting manufacturers of England and Scotland would have had to fall in line with the landed classes and the farmers and insist on higher duties for their protection. A victory for Chamberlain or even a half victory for the Liberals and free-traders might have meant all this; and certainly there was never a British general election since 1776 in which the United States had more at stake than in the election which has determined that Chamberlain and his scheme are to be thrust into the background and that the fiscal policy of Peel and Gladstone is to remain intact.

No reference has been made to Balfour and his scheme for retaliation. Reference is not necessary; for Balfour's scheme could not have been set up without establishing a protective system; and if Great Britain had decided at the general election in favor of an inroad on its present policy of freedom of trade, the decision would have been in favor of Chamberlain's plan; and Chamberlain as premier of a protectionist government would have been responsible for putting Great Britain on a protectionist basis as fully as was Earl Grey for the Reform Act of 1832 or Peel for the repeal of the Corn Laws.

So far as concerned the fiscal question, the issue at the general election was Bannerman or Chamberlain. Bannerman carried the country, and Balfour is to continue as leader of the Tory opposition in the House of Commons; but if Bannerman had been defeated Chamberlain would have become premier, and Balfour would have been compelled to step down. It was Chamberlain who raised the new issue. He did so almost single-handed; certainly with little effective help from Balfour; and had the popular vote been in his favor the country would have looked to Chamberlain and not to Balfour for the carrying out of a protective policy.

With victory for Chamberlain there could not have been room on the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons for both Chamberlain and Balfour. Chamberlain's success would have meant the end of Balfour as well as the defeat of Bannerman; and the only place of usefulness for Balfour would have been in the House of Lords. Had he adhered to the views which he held until after his defeat at Manchester, it is scarcely conceivable that a place would have been made for him in an administration of which Chamberlain was premier. For two and a half years Balfour had tried a middle course. It had obviously failed. Chamberlain had the upper hand with the Tories and Unionists when they went into the election; and only the overwhelming defeat of the party, and the concessions which Balfour made to Chamberlain when he was a candidate for the vacated seat for the City of London in February, saved for Balfour his position as nominal leader of the Tory minority in the House of Commons.

Although the fiscal policy of Great Britain was at stake, the general election of January, 1906, was not by any means fought exclusively on Chamberlain's proposals. Neither side has since the election advanced any such claim; and now that the Liberals have been returned to the House of Commons by an unprecedentedly large majority, it is impossible to credit all their success to the fight against the newer aspects of Chamberlainism.

Long before the election, almost as early as Chamberlain's abandonment of free trade, there were indications that England and Scotland were weary of Tory and Unionist rule—a weariness

ness altogether irrespective of the developments or rather the ruptures within the Tory party which dated from May, 1903, when Chamberlain began his fiscal reform propaganda at Birmingham. The by-elections between May, 1903, and the end of 1905 were proof of this weariness—this popular conviction that twenty years of power is too long a term for a political party. It is not possible to gauge accurately what effect Chamberlain's propaganda had in these by-electoral reverses for the Tories. The fiscal question was undoubtedly a large factor in many Tory reverses in the constituencies after May, 1903, but in none of these by-elections was the general record of the Unionist government ignored. The late government suffered from the abnormally high rate of the income tax from the time of the South African war. It suffered from the exposures of inefficiency and corruption which came with the end of the war. These two factors told adversely for the Tory government in the by-elections in such middle-class constituencies as Brighton and the Stretford division of Lancashire, which includes a large area of suburban Manchester; in these residential and suburban constituencies direct taxation is most felt.

From 1886 onward, middle-class England, especially that large section of it which is to be found in suburban London and in the better-class suburbs of all the large cities in the Midlands and North of England, had become increasingly Tory. The by-elections in 1903, 1904 and 1905 suggested that the current had set in the other direction, and that middle-class England was showing a disposition to occupy once more the political position which it held between the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1885.

Several well-defined causes contributed to this movement. One of these, which has already been mentioned, was the heavy burden of direct taxation which characterized the last five years of Tory rule. Another was the thrusting of third-rate and fourth-rate men of aristocratic family into responsible positions in the cabinet and the ministry—positions much beyond their ability—after the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Lord Goschen, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the late Earl Ritchie and Lord George Hamilton abandoned the Balfour administration when Chamberlain began to assail free-trade. Still another

cause was the growing feeling among the less partisan of the middle-class people that so long as the House of Lords remains as it is today, overwhelmingly Tory and Unionist, Home Rule for Ireland is only an imaginary danger. These influences no doubt accounted appreciably for the Tory reverses at the by-elections of 1904 and 1905, and for the gradual dwindling of the enormous majority with which the late Tory government met the House of Commons after the general election of 1900.

The education question has also been a great factor in this change in political feeling on the part of the English middle-classes. From 1832 until 1886 the Free Churchmen, who are largely of the middle classes, were as loyal to the Whig and Liberal party as the Grand Army of the Republic has been to the Republican party in the United States since the end of the war of the Rebellion. In those fifty-four years the Nonconformists obtained comparatively little from the Whig or Liberal administrations which were in power. The most important concession to Nonconformity in the nineteenth century—the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts—was made by the Tories in 1828, before the Free Churchmen obtained the electoral power which was secured to them by the Reform Act of 1832. Legislation freeing the Nonconformists from civil disabilities after the act of 1828 was slow in coming. It was grudgingly conceded while the Whigs were in control and was sometimes accompanied by distasteful safeguards for the Church of England; while as concerns official recognition for the Nonconformists—places in the cabinet or in the ministry—the number of Nonconformists who were so recognized until as late as 1885 did not reach more than half a dozen.

Free Churchmen in those years secured little from Whig and Liberal administrations. But Nonconformist political sympathies—the Wesleyan Methodists to some extent excepted—were with the Liberal party, even in the days when it was dominated by Whigs like Grey, Melbourne and Palmerston; and when Gladstone came into power their support of him was even more hearty and steadfastly loyal than of his Whig predecessors in the Liberal leadership.

Gladstone did much less than he might have done for the

Nonconformists—in particular as regards the Education Act of 1870 and the abolition of religious tests at the universities—and as a High Churchman he had little real sympathy with Nonconformity. But the Free Churchmen held to him, at first because of his Irish church policy, and after 1869 largely on account of his religious and family life, which differentiated him from any of the leaders whom the Liberal party had had between 1830, when Tory rule collapsed, and 1867, when he first became premier.

Gladstone would have had this Free Church support to the end of his political life had he not suddenly thrown in his lot with the Irish Home Rulers after the general election in 1885. Then tens of thousands of Free Churchmen parted company from him and the Liberals; and until the by-elections in 1904 began to go against the Balfour government there was no indication that the Free Churchmen—Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, Unitarians and Wesleyan Methodists—were returning to their old political allegiance. In 1904 and 1905, they were obviously making their way back into the ranks of the Liberal party. There were other proofs of this besides the by-elections. The movement was obvious at the annual conferences of the Free Churches; and it was even more significantly obvious in the political campaigning which began as soon as the general election approached and in the lists of Liberal candidates who presented themselves before the constituencies.

Chamberlain was responsible for much of the recruiting of the Liberals from the Liberal Unionists. Part of it was due to the causes I have already cited—particularly to general weariness of the unsatisfactory rule of the Tory aristocracy, who were as powerful in the Tory governments of 1895-1900 and 1900-1905 (Chamberlain's place in these governments notwithstanding) as in any of the Tory administrations between the death of Pitt and the breakdown of the Wellington administration in 1830. Moreover, the aristocratic personnel of these 1895-1900 and 1900-1905 governments—especially of the Balfour government from 1903 to 1905 after the resignations due to Chamberlain's new propaganda—was quite as much characterized by mediocre ability as any of the Tory governments between 1800 and 1830.

Not since the landed aristocracy lost its direct control of the House of Commons by the Reform Act of 1832, was there ever such a marked lack of power and ability in a Tory government as there was in the Balfour government during the last two and a half years of its existence. An examination of the list of men who constituted it almost suggests that political conditions were again what they were between the American Revolution and the Reform Act, and that the commercial and industrial classes in Great Britain had little or no part in the election of the House of Commons. It seemed as though the exercise of power for twenty years by the Tories and Unionists had exhausted all the marked political ability that was available at the time of the coalition of 1886; for four-fifths of the men who were of Balfour's ministry when it came to an end in December, 1905, were from no point of view worthy a place in a biographical dictionary of more permanent value than the annual issue of *Who's Who*. The make-up of the Balfour government in its last years was an affront to the intelligence of the British electorate; and, as the general election has now made manifest, the electorate at last came so to regard it.

Distrust of Chamberlain and his newest propaganda and the weakness and ineptitude of the Balfour government had much to do with the movement of the Liberal Unionists in the constituencies back to the Liberal party. But much of the disappearance of Liberal Unionism is traceable to the Education Act of 1902, and the injustice of closing to all but adherents of the Established Church over thirty thousand head-masterships and head-mistressships in 11,600 public elementary schools, the maintenance of which all comes either out of the imperial treasury or out of county and municipal taxation. These positions in the elementary schools are all civil service appointments, as much as clerkships in the state departments at Whitehall or in the post offices or the customs houses; yet by statutory enactment, dating from 1902, not one of these head-masterships can go to a Free Churchman unless he cut loose from the church of his fathers or of his mature convictions and accept confirmation in the Church of England which controls these church schools.

In the old days when Nonconformists were burdened with dis-

abilities, they were excluded entirely from the municipal and the national civil service. Even after the partial removal of disabilities in 1828, a day laborer could not go into the municipal service until he had taken an oath not to use his official position to the disadvantage or the detriment of the Established Church; and as it was only gradually that Nonconformists realized that the civil service was open to them, more than a generation elapsed before they began to make their way in any large numbers into the various departments of government service. As long as the Church of England contributed even a small quota to the maintenance of its elementary schools—even so small a quota as ten or fifteen per cent of the cost—Nonconformists could not and did not hope to take service in these schools; and in the country districts their exclusion from the church schools meant their exclusion from the teaching profession, because there were usually no other schools in their localities, and the entry to the school-teaching profession was chiefly through pupil-teacher-ship.

With the establishment of a national school system under which all the cost of maintaining the schools comes out of public money, Free Churchmen hoped that the school-teaching profession like the civil service would be freely open to them. But the archbishop of Canterbury, a majority of the bishops and Balfour and Chamberlain willed it otherwise; and by the Education Act of 1902—long before Chamberlain declared for protection—there was started the movement of the Free Churchmen away from Liberal Unionism and back to Liberalism—a movement which proved to be such an important factor in the late general election.

It is always difficult to say just when a political party that has come into existence for a special purpose comes to the end of its usefulness and disappears. The Whig party came into existence in the reign of William III to uphold the Revolution of 1688, and incidentally to develop what in the eighteenth century were the great governing families of England, and to make sure that these families did govern and possess themselves of the greater spoils of office. No one can fix the time at which the Whigs disappeared; for there are still Whigs by ancestry,

tradition and sympathies in the Liberal party, although since 1886 most Whigs have sunk their Whiggism in the Tory party. Still it now seems as though it were going to be possible to date the end of the Liberal Unionists from the general election of 1906; and when the memoir of the party comes to be written it will have to be said that it was largely created by Chamberlain in 1886, and that it was largely destroyed by him between the end of the South African war and the general election of 1906 by his part in and his responsibility for the Education Act of 1902, by his sudden conversion to protection and by his energetic campaign for the reënactment of the Corn Laws.

Not quite all the responsibility for the passing of Liberal Unionism can be laid upon Chamberlain. The abandonment of Home Rule by Liberals in Parliament and in the constituencies and the general agreement within the Liberal party that there must never be another Home Rule bill on the lines of the abortive bills of 1886 and 1893 helped on the movement and brought about the disappearance in the constituencies of many of the Liberal-Unionist political organizations which came into existence in 1886. Further, this abandonment of Liberal Unionism, at a time when there had come to be nothing to distinguish it from Toryism, was quickened by the ineptitude and lack of weight of the Balfour administration. English political life would indeed have lost the virility, wholesomeness and earnestness which had usually characterized it from 1830 to the end of Queen Victoria's reign, if, after England had realized that Home Rule had ceased to be a danger, the forces that made Liberal Unionism in 1886 had continued to support such weakness as marked the last two years of the administration which fell to pieces in December, 1905. Reaction had gone too far. The Tory party had exhausted itself long before the end came; and the only hope was in the return of a strong Liberal majority at the general election in 1906.

After the Home Rule split in 1886, the Liberals sustained disastrous losses in the newspaper world. In London they were left with only the *Daily News* among the morning newspapers, and the old *Pall Mall Gazette*—the *Pall Mall* of Yates Thompson's ownership and Stead's editorship—among the afternoon

journals. The *Times* went over; so did the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Chronicle*; so did the *Echo*, now no more, but then the popular London Radical evening half-penny paper; and so did the *Spectator*, still edited in 1886 by Richard H. Hutton. In the provinces, the Liberal newspaper losses included the *Birmingham Daily Post*, the foremost Radical newspaper of the Midlands in the years when Bright was one of the members for Birmingham; the *Western Morning News*, long the leading Liberal newspaper in the section of the country which is tributary to Plymouth; and the *York Herald*. For all practical purposes the Home Rulers in 1886 also lost the *Liverpool Daily Post*, the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*. In Scotland (which between 1832 and 1885 had been as generally Liberal and Radical as it had been overwhelmingly Tory in the days when Henry Dundas, the greatest electoral manager of his era, was the Scottish parliamentary manager) the Liberals lost the *Scotsman* in Edinburgh, the *Herald* in Glasgow and the *Free Press* in Aberdeen. The *Dundee Advertiser* was the only newspaper of any weight left to the Liberals north of the Tweed, after the split of 1886.

From 1886 to 1892, not less than half a million sterling was expended in endeavors to put on foot new Liberal daily newspapers. Only two of these attempts were successful. The *Leader* and the *Star* in London survive as the sole result of all this expenditure in newspaper equipment, salaries and advertising; and until the crisis on the fiscal question the Liberals were but little better placed as regards newspapers than they were in the first few years which followed the break-up of the party in 1886. In fact, for three or four years previous to 1900, they were not so well placed as between 1886 and 1890; for in the earlier years some of the newspapers newly put on foot, which have since disappeared, were then doing some service for Liberalism.

As the general election approached, several of the great newspapers which went over with the Liberal Unionists in 1886 came to the support of Campbell-Bannerman and the Liberals, and opposed Chamberlain and his propaganda. The *Spectator* threw in its lot with the new government; so did the *Daily Chronicle*, which was the first of the London newspapers to

abandon Liberal-Unionism; and in Scotland at the general election the Liberals had the support of the Glasgow *Herald* and the Aberdeen *Free Press*. This newspaper support was significant of the popular movement from Liberal Unionism back to Liberalism. It was the fiscal question—the battle for free-trade—and the merging of Liberal Unionism in Parliament in an obviously decadent Toryism that brought most of these newspapers back to the Liberal party. Particularly was this the case in Scotland; because the Education Act of 1902 does not apply to Scotland, nor does the Licensing Act of 1904. Both of these are exclusively English questions; and the other popular outcry against the late Tory government—that against the Chinese ordinance on the Rand—would not alone have caused these journals to veer round, although on the Chinese question the *Spectator* had not been at ease for eighteen months before the general election.

In England, the Chinese ordinance had two well-marked effects, both adverse to Chamberlain and his campaign. It impelled middle-class Nonconformists from Liberal Unionism towards Liberalism. It also aroused wide-spread hostility to Balfour and Chamberlain among the working classes—urban as well as rural—and it was unquestionably a powerful influence in favor of the fifty-one labor members who were elected in the English constituencies. Among people who have no interest in the Rand mines—and shares in the gold mines are not widely distributed—there was developed a conviction that the Balfour government had allowed itself to be tricked by the mine-owners into acceptance of the Chinese ordinance. It is now well understood in England that it was part of the policy of the mine-owners—a policy agreed upon in the early months of the war of 1899–1902—to depress Kafir wages by the introduction of Chinese labor when the war should come to an end.

At the end of the war I was on the Rand and also in Portuguese East Africa, which before the war was the great recruiting ground for Kafirs. From my own investigations I know that at that time—July, August and September, 1902—the labor agency of the Chamber of Mines was making only half-hearted efforts to get a full complement of “boys” for the mines at

Johannesburg. Apparently, judging from the Rand newspapers, recruiting was going on vigorously; but the sincerity of the effort to obtain labor may be judged from one fact which is on record and beyond dispute. Wages before the war, when there were 90,000 "boys" on the Rand, were fifty shillings a month. These were the regular wages. After the war, the mining companies by agreement would not pay more than thirty shillings a month. And yet at that time South Africa was still full of British troops; tens of thousands of natives were required for transport, commissariat, railway, dock and municipal service; mealies were commanding unprecedentedly high prices, so that it paid the natives to stay at home and cultivate their mealie patches; and thousands of the "boys" had large sums of money in hand which they had drawn for service with the British troops.

These were the economic conditions which prevailed in the country south of the Zambesi when the Chamber of Mines, in accordance with a policy decided upon in 1900, when the mine-owners and superintendents were among the refugees at Cape Town, determined to cut wages almost in half. It was impossible that the movement should succeed or that under these circumstances native laborers in adequate numbers should be forthcoming for the mines on the Rand. But England is remote from South Africa; and England lost interest after war and bloodshed were at an end. The movement to reduce wages served the end the Chamber of Mines had in view. It kept natives from the mines and thus demonstrated that there was a shortage of native labor. The mine-owners had had Chinese labor in mind long before peace was declared. At least a year earlier, Chamberlain, who was secretary of state for the colonies, had been sounded by the mine-owners of Rhodesia as to whether he would sanction the importation of Chinese coolies. He then brusquely refused to entertain the suggestion—his letter can be found in the report of the Chartered Company for 1901. This did not discourage the mine-owners of the Rand, who exercise an enormously greater political influence in South Africa than the British South Africa Company by which Rhodesia is administered.

The persistent and powerful plea of the Rand mine-owners

was supported by proof (of their making) that it was impossible to obtain native labor and by the contention that without Chinese the mining industry would collapse. Milner, who was then high commissioner, accepted the plea; and in 1904, on the initiative of Lyttelton, the late colonial secretary, Parliament sanctioned the Chinese ordinance which had been passed by the government-controlled Legislative Council at Pretoria. Then began the importation of coolies—"indented" for, like railway equipment or dry-goods, and reported by cable from Durban to Johannesburg, as the receipt of cotton at seaboard in the South is reported to Liverpool—until at the time of the general election there were 50,000 Chinamen immured in Andersonville-like compounds on the Rand.

Even the bishops, who either voted for the ordinance or failed to vote against it when it was before the House of Lords in 1904, are now tired of the Rand experiment and the retrograde movement for England which it involves; and tens of thousands of Tories who dislike to vote with the Liberals under any circumstances would be immensely relieved if the new Liberal government had the courage to bring the experiment completely to an end.

Following the lead of Chamberlain and Balfour, Tory stump speakers urged the danger of Home Rule—ignoring the existence of the House of Lords—and the protectionists among them enlarged on the splendors of empire and the elusive and mysterious "proffered hand"—the offer in writing of further preferential treatment for British manufacturers in Canada which Sir Wilfrid Laurier is alleged to have made to Chamberlain. But eloquence on these subjects at the electioneering meetings in industrial England did not escape abrupt interruptions from the audience with questions concerning the Chinese ordinance. The loss of three or four by-elections in 1905 was attributed even by Tory organizers to what they described as the popular misunderstanding of Chinese labor; and at the general election the Chinese ordinance turned thousands of wavering votes to Liberal and free-trade candidates.

The Chinese ordinance came more than a year after Chamberlain had broken away from the Balfour administration and

had set out to convert the Unionist party to protection. Balfour must have realized by that time (the parliamentary session of 1904) that the next general election would end the long era of Tory rule. He must have been convinced that the Tories were at the end of their tether; that nothing the government could do could save them, and perhaps also that no step it could take could add much to the jeopardy of the Tory party when the general election arrived. Otherwise it is difficult to account for his failure to disallow the Chinese ordinance. He could either have disallowed it or, better still, have prevented its enactment by the Legislative Council at Pretoria. Had he taken either course he would have broken with Lord Milner, who was then nearing the end of his term as high commissioner in South Africa. He would certainly have disgruntled the cosmopolitan group of stock-jobbers and town-lot speculators who every day assemble "between the chains" in Johannesburg. A few large contributions to the central campaign fund of the Tory party might also have been lost; and there would certainly have been a strident scolding from the *Daily Telegraph*, the organ of the Rand in London. This would have comprised all the probable damage to the Tory party from a rejection of the Chinese ordinance. It is far from certain that the rejection of the ordinance would have lost the Tory party a single vote at the general election even in the parliamentary division of London which includes Park Lane, where the Rand magnates have their palatial abodes. On the other hand, the acceptance of the ordinance by the Tory government and its endorsement by the House of Commons added enormously to the electioneering perplexities and difficulties of every Tory candidate. It was not necessary for the Liberal candidates at the general election to say much against the Chinese ordinance. The bill-stickers did the effective work on this question; and when they had covered all the barns in the rural constituencies and the hoardings in the towns with pictures of Chinamen in the Rand compounds, it was useless for Tory candidates to assert that there was nothing approaching slavery in the three-years' indenture, the felon-like transportation from the steamer at Durban to Johannesburg, the floggings at the order of the compound

superintendents, or the Andersonville structures on the mine reservations. In constituencies which included a large labor element, a Tory candidate could make no effective answer to the hoardings covered with pictures illustrating coolie conditions on the Rand. Two-thirds of the soldiers, army reserve men, militiamen, volunteers and railway men who were in South Africa during the war were back in civil life in 1906, with their names on the voters' lists; and the ex-soldier vote told heavily against the Tories and the Chinese ordinance.

At the general elections of 1895 and 1900, the Tory government had the support of the clergy of the Church of England and of the Roman Catholic Church, because of the promises then held out to them in connection with their schools. It is impossible to generalize as to the votes of the clergy at the election in 1906. But it is reasonable to conclude that the Church of England and the Roman Catholic clergy again voted with the Tories; this time out of gratitude for what was saved to the church schools and their managers by the Education Act of 1902. The act, while it threw the whole burden of maintaining the schools on the national and local treasuries, left the appointment of head-teachers and a large part of the general management of the schools in the hands of the clergy. Each church was allowed to continue its denominational teaching in the schools. These are the only churches which exercise this privilege. Before the act of 1902, the Congregationalists and Wesleyan Methodists had had control of elementary schools, the cost of maintaining which had, between the Forster Education Act of 1870 and the Balfour Act of 1902, been thrown as in the case of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic schools almost entirely on the public treasury. But in these schools, there never was any denominational teaching and Free Churchmen have never—certainly not since 1870—asked that the tenets of their churches should be taught in the public elementary schools.

Roman Catholics in England are of political weight only in the industrial constituencies of the Midlands and the North of England, in which there are large Irish laboring class populations. But in 1895 and again in 1900 the Catholic vote in many of these places was thrown to the Tory candidates, be-

cause the Catholic clergy as well as the clergy of the Established Church, had been given to understand that if the Tories were returned to power something would be done for the church voluntary schools—that is for the elementary schools managed by the Established and the Roman Catholic Churches. More was done for these voluntary schools—parochial schools as they would be termed in the United States—than could have been expected at the election in 1895 or even at that of 1900. But what was gained by the churches was by no means securely held. The privileges both of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Established Church were vigorously assailed by the Liberals from the passing of the Education Act until the general election. The Free Churchmen objected, as I have said, to the power of appointment of head-teachers exclusively from within the two privileged churches. They objected also to the distinctive doctrines of any church being taught in public elementary schools at the public expense; and furthermore, with regard to the Church of England, the Free Churchmen objected to the enormous grants from the imperial treasury to training colleges or normal schools to which admission was denied to all who were not by baptism and confirmation members of the Church of England.

The passive resistance movement which had gone on in England for three years prior to the general election and which had resulted in 70,800 summonses to the police court for the non-payment of local taxes for education, was a protest against these unfair sectarian conditions. The Free Churches are well organized. They are infinitely better organized than they were in 1870 when Gladstone and Forster paid them so little regard in the Education Act of that year—the act which established the school boards that survived until 1902; and on the formation of the Liberal government in December, 1905, and many times before then, the Free Churchmen made plain to Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues of the Liberal party that they did not intend to be served on the education question as they were a quarter of a century ago by Gladstone and his first cabinet. There were more Free Church candidates than at any previous general election; and largely owing to the passive resistance

movement and other methods of agitation against the Education Act of 1902, 176 Free Churchmen are of the new House of Commons.

The clergy of the Church of England and of the Roman Catholic Church had had long and ample warning that there was no permanence about the settlement of the education question of 1902. Every passive resister who had had his household belongings sold at auction in default of payment of his education tax, every one of the 176 passive resisters who had gone to jail in default of payment, had served to warn the clergy of these churches that their unfair advantages in connection with elementary education were held on a precarious tenure. Birrell's appointment as minister of education was another and still more ominous notification to the same effect, as Birrell is the only Free Churchman who has been at the head of the education department since Mundella was minister of education in Gladstone's 1881-85 administration. Consequently, at the general election, both the Established Church and the Roman Catholic Church were fighting to hold what they had got; and the votes of the clergy and of the electors who think on this question with them, or who could be influenced by them, were given to the Tory candidates without regard to free-trade, the Chinese ordinance, the liquor licensing question, or the weakness and ineptitude which marked the last three years of Tory rule.

No estimate can be made of the number of votes that were given to the Tories in return for the support which the Tory government gave to the denominational schools by the act of 1902; but there is good reason for assuming that the lay vote for the Tories as upholders of the existing school system was very much smaller than it was in 1895. Then both the clergy of the Church of England and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church in England worked strenuously in the interest of the Tories; because at that time the Tories were pledged to grant more government aid to the elementary schools, many of which in 1895 were confronting serious financial difficulties. The sweeping successes of Liberal candidates at the recent general election are proof that adherents of the Established Church in large numbers must have put free-trade, the Chinese

question and other questions at issue in the election before the question of the maintenance of the existing system of church schools. The success of Liberal and Labor candidates in the industrial constituencies in the North of England and the Midlands, in which Irish electors are numerous, is also proof that the priests of the Roman Catholic Church did not carry the electors of their parishes in favor of Tory candidates to anything like the same extent as in 1895. At that election fifteen or twenty seats were lost to the Liberals owing to the defection of Irish voters, who were influenced by the attitude of the priests on the school question.

It has long been claimed by the foremost authorities on the working of the Elementary Education Acts—by such authorities as the present and past presidents of the National Union of Teachers—that the religious difficulty is an issue for which the clergy of the Established Church and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are solely responsible; that ninety-nine of every hundred parents have always been satisfied with the religious teaching given in the board schools and have not desired that denominational teaching should be included in the curriculum of the elementary schools. The general election goes a long way towards substantiating this claim. It is the children of the working classes who attend the elementary schools; yet as the result of the election there are now 176 Free Churchmen in the House of Commons, most of them pledged to complete popular control of all elementary schools, to the exclusion of denominational teaching and to the abolition of all religious tests for teachers in schools maintained out of public funds.

A measure in the legislative record of the late Tory government which gave much dissatisfaction because it was a concession to powerful vested interests, long associated with the Tory party, was the Liquor Licensing Amendment Act of 1904. Before this act was passed it was within the power of the county and borough magistrates, assembled in brewster sessions, to refuse to renew the license of any drinking place solely on the ground that there was no public need of it; and between 1887, when a decision of the House of Lords finally determined that under the then existing licensing code the magistrates had this

power, and 1904, hundreds of licenses were so refused each year.

The judgment of the House of Lords was most disturbing to the brewery companies and to private concerns in the trade; for these companies had, on a very moderate estimate, spent from £100,000,000 to £115,000,000 in buying up licensed houses and tying them to the breweries so as to secure a monopoly of the local trade. All this money had been invested on the assumption on the part of the brewers that when once a license had been granted to a drinking shop—no matter how local sentiment and local conditions might change—the magistrates could not refuse the renewal of the license unless the licensee were guilty of at least three serious offences against the licensing code.

The brewery companies had put their capital into these houses on this assumption, notwithstanding the fact that every liquor license from 1552 to 1904 had carried on its face the intimation that it was good only for the year of issue—for the year that lies between one brewster sessions and the next. After the decision of the law lords in 1887, however, and until as late as 1903, renewals of licenses were refused in many parts of England for no other reason than that there was no public need of them, and that the continuance of unnecessary drinking places added to the work of the police. In the year of the House of Lords decision (1887), there were 106,941 licensed drinking houses in England; one to every 242 of the population. By 1903 the number had been reduced by 1,584, owing to the closing of what the magistrates regarded as unnecessary houses, besides a further diminution due to the abandonment of licenses because of lack of business or structural unsuitability of the houses to which licenses had been attached. In the meantime the brewers were in a state of continuous alarm, and they went to Balfour, who was then prime minister. Balfour agreed with them that the decision of the House of Lords jeopardized the interests of the liquor trade and that if there was in law no property right in public house liquor licenses there was urgent need for legislation to establish such a right.

The interview between the brewers and the premier was in

March, 1904, long after the liquor trade had adopted the motto "Our trade our politics"; and in the session then current Bal-four made good his pledge to the brewers, and the Licensing Act was carried through Parliament. Under the act licenses are now treated as property; and when the renewal of a license is refused because there is no need for the house, compensation must be awarded to the dispossessed licensee and to the owner of the house, whether the owner be the licensee or, as is more frequently the case, the licensee be merely the agent of a brewery company. The compensation fund is raised by a levy on a *pro rata* basis on the surviving public houses in the police area. By this arrangement only a restricted number of houses can be closed each year, the number being determined by the amount of money available for compensation. The magistrates have thus much less freedom of action, much less discretion, than they had before 1904; while the act adds greatly to the value of all existing licensed houses.

The Tories were in opposition at the general election. They had, however, been in power to within a month of the polling. They had been in power practically since 1886; and they had a long legislative and administrative record to defend. They had to apologize for the inefficiency and corruption which were disclosed at the end of the war in South Africa. While their legislative record satisfied the Rand mine-owners as concerned the Chinese ordinance, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in regard to the schools, and the brewing interests by virtue of the recognition of a property right in liquor licenses, it did not give general satisfaction to the rank and file of the Tory party, who had derived no advantages, direct or indirect, from any of these measures.

The burden of imperial taxation also told against the party among its less partisan adherents. In 1885 the income tax stood at eight pence in the pound; and in two years between 1880 and 1885—the period covered by the second Gladstone administration—it had been as low as five pence. For the fiscal year 1905–06 the income tax—payable by all men and women on all their receipts from whatever source above £160 a year—stood at one shilling in the pound; and only once since the

general election in 1900 had it fallen below one shilling; while in 1901-02 it was one shilling and two pence, and in 1902-03 it was one shilling and three pence or $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent—higher than it has ever been in the modern history of the impost.

The legislative and administrative record of the Tories was thus unfavorable to them. The country was manifestly tired of them; and in addition to the weariness and the feeling that a change from Tory rule had come to be imperative, there had been developments outside Parliament between the election of 1900 and that of 1906 that proved most helpful to the Liberals. The most important of these were: (1) Chamberlain's propaganda for protection; (2) the conviction in England and Scotland that the danger of Home Rule had been dispelled after Gladstone's retirement from the House of Commons in 1894; and (3) the fact that the Liberals had come to a working agreement with the Labor party, both with the Independent Labor party and with those trade unionists who were intent on having their representatives in the House of Commons, but who had not identified themselves with the Labor Representation Committee organized in 1890 by Keir Hardie, the member for Merthyr Tydvil.

Many of the large landed proprietors in rural England, many of the clergy in rural parishes and many of the tenant farmers early gave in their adhesion to Chamberlain. But the laborers in rural England never gave his movement any support; and it is only necessary to turn to the electoral map as it now stands, with the county divisions returning only 64 Tories out of a total of 292 English county members in the House of Commons, to see what effect the vote of the agricultural laborers had in making an end of Chamberlain's scheme.

On the electoral franchise as it existed until 1885, free-trade would have fared badly in all the agricultural counties; for then only landowners and large tenants had votes, and the agricultural laborer had merely to look on at an election and to cheer the candidate that his farmer employer and his farmer's landlord were supporting. Today every farm laborer who rents a cottage—no matter if the rent is only eighteenpence or two shillings a week—is on the voters' list. Voting by ballot has been

universal in England for thirty years. It was difficult to persuade the farm laborers, when they first began voting in 1885, that the ballot was really secret. Since 1885, however, a better educated and more independent generation of farm laborers has arisen. They understand that except in the very rare case of a scrutiny the ballot is secret beyond all peradventure; and for three years before the general election, at every by-election in a rural division, agricultural laborers had been marking their ballots against Tory and protectionist candidates.

It has come down by tradition to the laborers in rural England that the Corn Laws never brought them any better wages; and although wages today seldom exceed eighteen or twenty shillings a week, they know that this is much more than the laborers received between the French Revolution and the abolition of the Corn Laws. These traditions have been handed from one generation of English farm laborers to the next. They are of the folklore of rural England; and it was not necessary, after Chamberlain began his campaign, that free-trade speakers in agricultural England should dwell much on conditions in England when the landlord-enacted Corn Laws were on the statute book and when rural laborers were without parliamentary representation in the House of Commons.

A generation ago agricultural laborers who openly supported Liberal candidates ran some risks: they might have been confronted within a week after an election that had gone against the Tories with the need of finding new employers. Few agricultural laborers had to carry any such risk at the last general election; for today the laborers are less dependent on the landowners, the clergy and the farmers than ever before in the history of agricultural economy in England. Today they are free to vote as they choose, not only because the ballot is secret, but because, poor and insufficient as their wage may seem to people accustomed to American wages and the American scale of living, English rural laborers are now comparatively independent. The last twenty-five or thirty years have seen a never-ending procession of laborers from rural England wending its way to London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle, and to the great centers of the iron and steel and

textile industries which are scattered over the Midlands and the North of England. It is the young men who go, and their going is so continuous that there is a lack of efficient farm labor all over England; and today few and remarkably advantageously placed are the farmers who can discharge a laborer, or even make his staying uncomfortable, because he may have chosen to vote at a parliamentary election in opposition to his employer.

This new economic and social freedom of the rural laborer meant much for the Liberals and free-traders. It meant more even than they counted upon when it was determined to put up candidates in every county constituency, and not to allow any seats, however apparently securely held, to go to the Tories by default. In industrial England, and especially in the textile counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, Chamberlain's scheme from the first met with universal opposition. It commended itself neither to employers nor to work-people. The mill-owners in the cotton and woollen industries promptly realized that if Chamberlain should be empowered by a popular vote to enact a protective tariff, he could not possibly do anything for the advantage of the cotton and woollen mills which export their product. These men knew that if there were duties to protect British farmers there must also be duties to protect British manufacturers in the home market; and that as a result of these two sets of duties there would be demands for advances in wages from the strongly organized unions in the textile and engineering trades, and an advance in price of building materials and of all descriptions of equipment and mill supplies. As for foreign competition in the textile industries, the protectionists never even attempted to persuade Lancashire and Yorkshire that it existed.

Soon after Chamberlain had propounded his scheme at Birmingham in 1903, he disclaimed any idea of imposing protective duties on raw materials. This explanation he made because of the outcry in the cotton and woollen centers of Lancashire and Yorkshire. But the explanation was of very little service to Chamberlain. It was not regarded as adequate by the men in the textile industries. They realized that if Canadian lumber were to have a preference at British ports over lumber

from the Southern states or from Norway, South Africa and Australia would insist on preference for the wools they export to Great Britain. Granting that Australia and the South African colonies were accorded preferential treatment for their principal exports, it was asked in Lancashire whether India, Egypt and other over-sea possessions of Great Britain in which cotton is grown would not demand, with justice, similar favors; and if these were conceded, both the cotton industry of Lancashire and the woollen industry of Yorkshire would be confronted with difficulties beyond measure.

Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire, in which are comprised all the great centers of the textile industries, at the general election of 1895, out of a total of 122 members returned 84 Tories and Unionists. At the general election in 1900, 82 Tories and Unionists and 40 Liberals were elected. The answer of the textile counties to Chamberlain at the general election in 1906 was the return of 95 Liberals and Labor men, all opposed to protection, and only 17 Tories. The Chamberlain reverses were nearly as serious in the coal and iron counties of the North and Midlands. Birmingham remained loyal to Chamberlain; and so did the county of Warwick. Elsewhere in the iron and steel districts the Tory and protectionist candidates were defeated and large gains accrued to the Liberals.

The Liberal success in industrial England was partly due to an understanding between the Liberal organizers in London and in the constituencies with the Labor Representation Committee, by which three-cornered contests were avoided. Labor candidates at the late elections were divided into three groups—miners' union candidates not associated with the L. R. C.; candidates nominated by this committee; and candidates of the Social Democratic Federation, the oldest of the socialistic organizations in Great Britain. These socialist candidates were not recognized either by the local Liberal organizations or by the central organizations of the Liberal party in London; and they went to the polls in nine constituencies in opposition alike to Tory and Liberal candidates, but without success, not a single Social Democrat being elected.

The miners' candidates were adopted as the Liberal candidates in the constituencies they contested; and except in a few instances the candidates of the L. R. C. were not opposed by Liberals. The first Labor members were elected to the House of Commons in 1874. They were Burt of Morpeth and Macdonald of Stafford, both presidents of miners' unions. Between 1874 and the end of the Parliament in 1905, other Labor men were elected; most of them, though not all, trade-union officials. But before the Parliament of 1906 was chosen, the number of Labor men never exceeded seventeen, which was the strength of the Labor vote in the short-lived House of Commons elected in 1885, after the extension of the franchise by Gladstone's act of 1884.

All the Labor men in the House of Commons up to 1900, with the exception perhaps of Keir Hardie, owed their election to the support of the Liberal organizations in the constituencies from which they were chosen; and with the exceptions of Broadhurst, Howell, Cremer and Burns, these members were enabled to bear the expenses of a parliamentary contest and to maintain themselves at Westminster through the willingness of the trade unions, with which they were connected, to draw on their funds to secure direct representation in Parliament.

Until 1901, there was no national organization for securing the return of direct representatives of Labor. The National Miners' Federation, long before 1901, was committed to the policy of direct representation; but its efforts were exclusively in behalf of miners' trade-union officials, and not all of the miners' unions are of the Federation. The first national movement intended to include men in all industries, skilled and unskilled, developed out of the Trades Union Congress, and was begun in 1901. Keir Hardie and the other organizers of the Labor Representation Committee appealed to all the trade unions; and except the miners' unions, practically all of them came into the new organization and agreed to make a small levy on their members to pay twenty-five per cent of the expenses of Labor candidates at elections and to provide Labor men returned to the House of Commons with salaries of £200 a year.

Under the constitution of the L. R. C., candidates nominated

under its auspices agree to "form a distinct group in Parliament, with its own whips and its own policy on Labor questions." It is further agreed that the Labor group shall "abstain strictly from identifying itself with any section of the Liberal or Conservative party;" and that the members of the group shall "abide by the decision of the group, and shall appear before their constituencies under the title of Labor candidates only." The object of the last clause is to differentiate the Labor members from the older Labor men in the House of Commons, such as Broadhurst, Bell, Burns, Howell and Cremer, who, in the Parliaments between 1885 and 1905, acted with the Liberals and who formed the nucleus of the group returned at the general election of 1906 as Liberal-Labor members. Keir Hardie was of the House of Commons when the L. R. C. was organized; and between 1901 and the dissolution of the Parliament of 1900-1905 he was joined by three other members, elected under the auspices of the L. R. C.

As soon as the committee was organized in 1901 the Labor propaganda was begun, and candidates were put in the field in readiness for the general election. They were nominated in some constituencies which at normal times were Liberal, but which had elected Tories at the general election held while the war was in progress in South Africa. Ultimately, an understanding was attained between the Liberal organizers in London and the L. R. C. A certain number of industrial constituencies were assigned to the Labor men; and the L. R. C. on its part agreed not to jeopardize the chances of Liberal candidates in other constituencies by nominating Labor candidates. In this way fifty L. R. C. candidates were in the field at the general election; and, except where candidates of the Social Democratic Federation were nominated, there were few of the three-cornered contests which in 1895 and 1900 had resulted in Liberal or Radical seats being handed over to the Tories.

The L. R. C. went into the elections with a parliamentary fund of £6,000 in hand. By its platform its candidates were pledged to

The principles embodied in the Trade Disputes Bill.

The Amendment of the Compensation Act so as to give compensation to all workers in every trade from the date of the accident.

The amendment of the Truck Act to prevent stoppages of any description from wages.

The amendment of the Unemployed Act so that employment can be found at trade-union rates for those unable to obtain work.

The abolition of enforced Chinese labor in South Africa.

The establishment of a state pension fund at sixty years of age.

An extension of the Housing of the Working Classes Act.

Returning officers' fees to be a charge upon the national exchequer.

Adult suffrage.

The establishment of an eight-hour working day.

The Trade Disputes Bill, put in the forefront of the Labor program, was a measure introduced in the Parliament of 1900-1905 and supported by the Liberals and all the Labor men, to offset the decision of the House of Lords, sitting as a court of appeal, in the Taff Vale Railway case—a decision which made trade-union funds open to attack in the law courts by employers who had been damaged by the wrongful action of trade-union officials. The House of Lords' decision of 1900 was the most serious blow at trade unionism since trade unions were given a legal status in 1869; and it was in large measure directly responsible for the organization of the Labor Representation Committee.

The attitude of the new Labor party towards all other candidates—Liberal and Tory—was defined in a general appeal to trade unionists issued on the eve of the elections. "Do not vote," reads one of the paragraphs, "for any candidate who is opposed to the trade-union program. Vote for all Labor and other candidates who are prepared to resist taxes on food and industry, to support an amendment of the Education Act, and the other reforms embodied in the program of the Trades Union Congress." All trade unionists and wage-earners were also urged to work zealously for the return of Labor candidates "and to show by their determination how anxious the working classes are for an honest government, desirous of legislating for the wants and requirements of the people." "Now

is the chance of a lifetime. Don't throw it away," continued the manifesto.

We want something beyond the old demand for a living wage. The demand for labor today should be for a higher standard of living. In all constituencies where Labor candidates are in the field, let there be no division as to whether a Labor candidate is of one school of thought or another, as all are progressive ; and vigorously show your opponents what workmen are capable of doing when they are put to the test.

A sub-committee of the Trades Union Congress issued this appeal—not the L. R. C. It was signed by members of the Liberal-Labor party and by members of the L. R. C. ; and was an appeal for support for all three groups of the Labor party in the 1900–1905 House of Commons—the miners' representatives ; Liberal-Labor members, of whom Burns and Broadhurst are typical ; and the members of the L. R. C., who were returned to the House of Commons after the organization of the committee in 1901.

Fifty candidates were nominated by the L. R. C. Twenty-nine were elected, in addition to fourteen miners' members and fourteen Liberal-Labor candidates. There are accordingly in the new House of Commons fifty-seven Labor men of three different schools. This is more than three times the number in any Parliament since Labor members began to appear in 1874. It is only eight less than the Irish Nationalist following of Parnell after the general election of 1880, the last election on the comparatively narrow franchise established by the second Reform Act in 1867. None but miners—mostly miners' union officials—are of the exclusively trade-union group. The Liberal-Labor group is more comprehensive, as it includes four journalists ; an engineer (John Burns) ; a grocer ; a stone mason ; a barge builder ; and officials of the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, the Navvies' Union and the Railway Servants' Union. In the L. R. C. group there are four cotton operatives' union officials ; four representatives of printers' unions ; an ex-civil servant ; an elementary school teacher ; a grocer ; and representatives of engineers, miners, bricklayers, carpenters, furniture makers, shipbuilders and boiler makers' unions. Several of

the unions which are represented in the L. R. C. group, such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and the London Compositors' Society, are making parliamentary allowances to their men in addition to contributing to the general fund of the L. R. C., the fund out of which the members are receiving salaries of two hundred pounds a year.

The old school Labor members, those who are now of the Liberal-Labor group, and the Miners' group, sat with the Liberals on the government or the opposition benches, responded to the whips of the Liberal party and were closely allied with the Liberals in Parliament and in the constituencies. These relations are being continued in the new Parliament; and the Liberal-Labor group (now one less in number than at the opening of Parliament, by means of the retirement of Broadhurst and the election of a Liberal member in his place at Leicester in March last) and the fourteen miners' representatives sit on the government benches. The members of the L. R. C. group, however, sit on the benches below the gangway on the opposition side of the House in company with the Nationalists. Government whips are not sent to them; and the members of the group are so intent on maintaining their independence that although the National Liberal Club, the rendezvous of popular Liberalism in London, is open to them on terms sufficiently easy not to embarrass their finances, they have decided to hold aloof from the club.

The appearance of this new force in English politics is no surprise to students of English parliamentary and electoral history. After the franchise was extended in 1884 there were indications that such a development was in sight. Immediately following the general election of 1885, however, there came the division in the Liberal party over Home Rule. By the time England and Scotland had ceased to have any dread of Home Rule, there came the South African war and still another division in the Liberal and Radical party. The abnormal conditions prevailing from 1886 to 1903 really account, it seems to me, for the fact that Labor, although in possession of the parliamentary franchise, was so slow in making for itself a commanding place in the House of Commons.

Never since present day Liberalism began to be traceable as a great force in English politics has a Liberal government been in so independent a position as the government which was confirmed in office by the general election of 1906. From 1830 until the incoming of the Irish Nationalists in the Parliament of 1874-80, Whig and Liberal administrations were always more or less dependent on the votes of the Irish members. Even in the Parliament of 1880-1885—the high water mark of Liberalism in the reign of Queen Victoria—Gladstone had a majority of only 42 over the combined forces of the Tories and Nationalists; and it is a matter of record that in the 1885-1886 Parliament and the Parliament of 1892-95, the Gladstone and Roseberry governments were absolutely dependent on the Nationalist vote. In the new Parliament, the Liberals have a majority of 130 over the combined vote of the Tories and protectionists, the Irish Nationalists and the twenty-nine members of the L. R. C. group. The Liberals are now free of the Irish Home Rule question; the Newcastle program of 1885 is of the past; and as the constituencies are unmistakably with the government and are eagerly looking for progressive legislation, which has fallen much into arrears during the ten years of reaction under Salisbury and Balfour, the House of Lords is not likely to prove obstructive—it is not likely that there will be any repetition of the tactics of the Upper House which characterized the enactment of the measure for the extension of the franchise and for the redistribution of electoral power in 1884 and 1885.

There are two reasons why the House of Lords will not be assertive. Except in 1884-1885 it has never since 1831 brought itself into direct and obvious antagonism to the well ascertained popular will; and it is even less likely to do so in the new Parliament because of the weak, disrupted and almost leaderless plight of the Tory party in the House of Commons, and because in the House of Lords itself there is no leader of the parliamentary ability and strength of Salisbury, who almost single-handed made the fight in the Lords over Gladstone's Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1884-1885.

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